

You have the Power to Prepare for electricity blackouts

Visit www.longbeach-recycles.org for tips.

A  SPECIAL
EDITION:

Our Energy Crisis

June/July, 2001

City website: www.ci.long-beach.ca.us

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A letter to citizens

Energy Task Force: Conserve, communicate during crisis

Dear Residents and Business Owners of Long Beach:

For three months the Energy Task Force has been meeting and looking at both the electrical and natural gas energy crisis. We've heard numerous reports from a wide range of agencies on various aspects of the energy environment from production to conservation.

We are very impressed with the commitment of the Task Force members. It's a task that's being taken very seriously—everyone on the Task Force is applying themselves to some very involved and complicated issues. The Task Force is made up of a cross section of participants that have not been afraid to challenge one another.

At the June 5 City Council meeting, the Task Force made recommendations that include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Continue implementing a plan to communicate information regarding electric outages, conservation, rate saving and assistance programs to all Long Beach residents and business owners.

- ✓ Develop a "one-stop" information system.

- ✓ In addition to The Wave, prepare printed documents for distribution that address the energy crisis and contain useful conservation and energy efficiency information.

- ✓ Use renewable energy wherever practical and investigate the use of solar panels at City facilities.

- ✓ Provide technical assistance and evaluation for renewable energy sources and assist with funding applications.

- ✓ Reformat the City's utility bill to make it more understandable.

- ✓ Address natural gas purchasing policies and strategies.

- ✓ Review alternative energy technologies.

The Task Force believes these recommendations are well-studied, valuable solutions at a time when Long Beach citizens are looking to its local government to take decisive action.

Mike Murray
Christine Shippey
Task Force Co-Chairs

Blackouts: How to prepare, what to expect

This issue of The Wave is devoted to the electrical energy crisis facing California residents. It was compiled by the Long Beach Energy Task Force to help you prepare for what could be a summer of frequent blackouts and skyrocketing electricity costs.

What is a controlled rotating outage (blackout)?

Blackouts occur when electrical power in a defined area is taken off-line to prevent more severe consequences, such as a total collapse of the electrical system.

Who decides how the power is taken off-line?

Utility companies (Southern California Edison [SCE] in Long Beach) make the call after the California Independent System Operator (ISO), the manager of the state's power grid, tells them to reduce power usage.

When is "Peak Time?"

Generally speaking, peak

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Blackouts

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electrical use time is from noon until 7 p.m. People are encouraged to limit their use of electricity during this time period.

How does SCE decide which group goes off-line?

SCE has divided its service area of several cities into approximate groups of one megawatt each. A group consists of several small neighborhoods throughout its service area. A sample blackout scenario: Group 1 is notified of a blackout. In Long Beach, four areas, all belonging to Group 1, would be impacted, along with over 30 other neighborhoods throughout the SCE area. Currently SCE has over 106 groups established. If the ISO orders SCE to reduce power by three megawatts per hour, then three groups lose power for the first hour, three different groups during the second hour, etc. Once a group has experienced an outage, it is placed at the bottom of the list.

Are people given notice that their power will be cut?

Television and radio stations will be announcing the group numbers prior to the blackout so that residents and businesses will have some idea when their house or business may be affected. Check your June bill for your group number.



If you find your home without its lights sometime this summer because of a "rolling blackout," there are some safety tips to consider.

How soon in advance will the message be given?

According to the Governor's office, the ISO will tell the general public the potential for rolling blackouts 48 hours in advance, with an update 24 hours in advance, based on factors such as weather, outages, supply and demand. The ISO will also provide frequent updates to the public during periods of forecasted electricity emergencies, and will notify utilities and public safety agencies one hour in advance of any possible power outage.

SCE will notify local media and public safety agencies no

less than one hour in advance as to the time and location where the anticipated blackout will occur.

How long will I be without electrical power?

On the average, a blackout lasts one hour in each group.

Is anyone exempt from a blackout?

In general, circuits that include fire, police stations, hospitals, prisons, facilities considered essential to the national defense, commercial air and sea operations, radio and TV broadcast services, and water and sewage treatment facilities are exempt.

SoCal Edison increases rates effective June 3

Your June 2001 SCE electrical bill will reflect a rate increase as dictated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

It is anticipated that the residential rate class could increase by an average of 17 percent, retroactive to March 27, 2001.

This bill will identify your group number. It can be found on the upper left corner of your bill. This group number will assist you in determining if you will be impacted by a power outage.

Group numbers affected by a blackout will be announced on

television and radio stations as they become available (see above articles).

Additional information about your bill and blackouts can be found on the SCE website at www.sce.com or by calling SCE at (800) 684-8123.

DEALING WITH BLACKOUTS

It is anticipated that this summer California could experience up to 35 days with blackout occurrences. You can take several steps to help control the situation. Discussing these ideas with your family and co-workers will create a safer and less fearful environment.

Before a Blackout:

- ☐ Have flashlights, batteries, a first aid kit, and a battery-operated radio on hand. Candles are never advised as they can easily start fires.
- ☐ Cordless telephones that require plug-in bases (in addition to phone jacks) will not operate during power outages. Have a landline and/or a charged cell phone available for emergencies.
- ☐ Keep a copy of your SCE account number, your rotating power outage group number and SCE's customer service number (see below) near the telephone in case you need to call for service.
- ☐ Keep a flashlight and shoes by your bed in case an outage occurs during the night. Knocking over and then stepping on breakable items causes some of the most common injuries during emergencies.
- ☐ Pre-program your cell phone for the non-emergency

Long Beach Police Department number: 562-435-6711. 911 calls from cell phones are answered by the California Highway Patrol and then routed to LBPD causing delayed response time.

- ☐ Keep a small amount of extra cash and keep your gas tank reasonably full. ATMs and gas pumps will not operate during an outage.
- ☐ Change the batteries on your home or business alarm on a regular basis.

During a Blackout:

- ☐ Stay calm – remember it will only last one hour.
- ☐ Turn on your battery-operated radio for news.
- ☐ Long Beach Fire and Police Departments will be staffed for emergency situations.
- ☐ Do call 911 in case of emergencies.
- ☐ Use common sense when driving! Treat all intersections as if they were 4-way stops!
- ☐ Check to see if power is out in nearby homes or businesses. If you are the only one affected by an outage, you may have a service problem. Check your circuit breakers for trouble and, if necessary, call SCE.
- ☐ Restrict cell phone use. If everyone in your area uses a cell phone at the same time, it

will jam airwaves and emergency calls will not get through.

- ☐ Turn off all appliances, leaving one light on so you will know when power resumes.
- ☐ Unplug computer(s) to avoid the possibility of surge damage when the power returns.
- ☐ Check on the well being of friends and neighbors, particularly those who are elderly or sick.
- ☐ Never cook or heat indoors with charcoal. Charcoal creates carbon monoxide and can have serious or fatal consequences if used indoors.
- ☐ Do not open freezers and refrigerators unnecessarily, as temperature loss will speed thawing and could harm meats, poultry and fish.

After a Blackout:

- ☐ Check to see that all appliances are operating safely.
- ☐ Check frozen meats, poultry and fish. Items that have thawed should be used immediately or discarded.
- ☐ Check refrigerator temperature. Food items should still be cool after a one-hour outage; however, if you experience an outage of longer duration, you should discard items containing eggs and dairy products.

CLIP AND SAVE

Do *not* call 911 to find out if there is an outage. Reserve 911 calls for emergencies.

If you need information about an electricity situation, call SCE at:

English:	(800) 655-4555	Korean:	(800) 628-3061
Cambodian:	(800) 843-1309	Spanish:	(800) 441-2233
Chinese:	(800) 843-8343	Vietnamese:	(800) 327-3031
TDD:		(800) 352-8580	

HELPFUL ENERGY WEBSITES

City of Long Beach

www.ci.long-beach.ca.us

Calif. Energy Commission

Cash Rebates for renewable energy electric-generating systems such as solar, photovoltaics, wind turbines, fuel cells

www.energy.ca.gov/greengrid

www.flexyourpower.ca.gov

www.consumerenergycenter.org
(for energy tips)

U.S. Department of Energy

Step-by-step conservation efforts at your house

www.energy.gov

www.eren.doe.gov

www.savepower.lbl.gov

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Information for businesses

www.epa.gov/smallbiz

Southern California Edison

Energy efficiency/energy audits, appliance rebates, recycling refrigerators/freezers

www.sce.com

California Department of Consumer Affairs

www.dca.ca.gov

California Independent System Operators

www.caiso.com

HELPFUL ENERGY PHONE NUMBERS

Southern California Edison

General customer service

1-800-684-8123

Relamping for low-income residents

562-437-0681

Appliance rebates

1-800-844-4509

Refrigerators/freezer recycling

1-800-234-9722

Energy efficiency/energy audit

1-800-362-7413

1-800-278-8585

City Light and Power

Please call if you see streetlights on during the day.

1-888-LIGHT OUT (1-888-544-4868)

24 hours a day

City of Long Beach

Energy Ombudsman

562-570-7555

Calif. Energy Commission

Renewable energy electric-generating systems (solar, photovoltaics, wind turbines, fuel cells)

1-800-555-7794

Veterans in Community Service

Weatherization for low-income residents, low-income home energy assistance program information

562-695-9040